

SENATOR ANDREA L. STILLMAN

Twentieth District

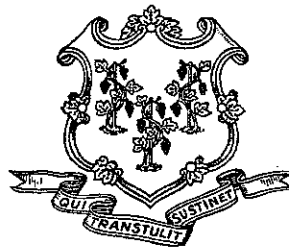
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Testimony on RB 6317 (Ct Cruise Ship Task force)

Commerce Committee

February 17, 2011

Good afternoon, Senator LeBeau and Representative Berger, and members of the Commerce Committee. For the record I am State Senator Andrea Stillman, 20th district.

I am here to lend my support for RB 6317, AA Appropriating Funds for the Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force. I submitted the original proposal along with many local legislators because this is such a worthwhile program to continue. It has been extremely successful in the City of New London, which has one of the three deep water ports in Connecticut, and utilizes the Admiral Shear Pier which is owned by the state.

Since 2002 the Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force has been helping to bring ships to southeastern Ct., successfully and with very little funding. The size of the cruise ships that have been visiting New London has grown from as little as 400 passengers to as large as 3,000 with a crew of 1,800. Needless to say the day the ships come to the city is a real boost to the local economy – as much as \$1 - \$2million has been infused in the course of the season.

The state has been supportive all these years, when we had some money to invest, \$75,000 per year was the commitment and the reason the Task Force was able to stretch those dollars was because of the remarkable volunteers we have and their dedication to making this port of call one that visitors will remember after they leave and want to return to one day. The City of New London has also made a monetary commitment by providing a grant of \$15,000 to help pay for buses that transport the visitors to local tourist attractions which also benefits the region. It is so exciting the morning the cruise ship arrives at the pier and towers over the downtown. It is really a sight to see. And then to see tourists enjoying the architecture of our historic buildings and shopping in the downtown businesses gives the city a great boost.

Just yesterday Governor Malloy said, "Connecticut is open for business." I believe that the cruise ships continuing to come to our state sends that message to the industry.

I would appreciate the committee giving consideration to amending the bill for an appropriation for both FY12 and 13. In order for this to be an ongoing success it needs secure funding for two years due to the need for the industry to plan in advance.

Thank you again for consideration of this request and I ask that you act positively on RB 6317.